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ABSTRACT

Teacher education programs are rapidly changing to ensure that pre-service teachers are well prepared to successfully conquer the critical issues they will encounter in K-12 public schools. The major issue influencing teaching and learning is school violence and the lack of a sense of peace and caring in educational institutions. The educational system provides an excellent opportunity for adults and children to explore and practice mutuality and reciprocity of respect and caring. Peace education refers to a non-authoritarian educational process that is compatible with peace and avoids all structural violence. A model for implementing Peace Education in the kindergarten through third grade curriculum as an effort to teach caring skills in elementary school is presented. The model addresses concepts related to peace and caring such as: (1) The meaning of peace and caring; (2) Peace and caring enhancing healthy families; (3) Peace and caring as a tool for positive relationships; (4) Peace and caring as related to diversity issues; (5) Visions of a peaceful, caring society; and (6) Emotional intelligence as related to intelligence quotient. Strategies are provided for parents, teachers, and principals. (JBJ)

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Peace Education: Enhancing Caring Skills and Emotional Intelligence in Children

This is a model for implementing Peace Education in the curriculum in an effort to teach caring skills in elementary school. The program will address concepts related to peace and caring such as :

1. The meaning of peace and caring
2. Peace and caring enhancing healthy families
3. Peace and caring as a tool for positive relationships
4. Peace and caring as related to diversity issues
5. Visions of a peaceful, caring society
6. Emotional intelligence as related to intelligence quotient (IQ)

Teacher education programs are rapidly changing to ensure that pre-service teachers are well prepared to successfully conquer the critical issues they will encounter in K-12 public schools. The student population in America's schools have changed tremendously within the past decade. There are many societal factors impacting the developmental processes of school-aged children that did not exist ten years ago. The major issue that is influencing teaching and learning is school violence and the lack of a sense of peace and caring in educational institutions in this country.

The new vision for supporting teachers to continue in education must include a curriculum with a major component emphasizing the importance of peace education focused on enhancing student's caring skills. The current research findings on emotional intelligence may provide new solutions to assist children in controlling their emotions and helping them develop new skills for succeeding in relationships and in life.

American society has virtually abandoned its children. Our children are often left emotionally adrift, physically alone, and unattended by the adults who are responsible for caring about them. Contrary to the common myth, this abandonment is not restricted to children of poverty or to children whose parents do not love them. Some of the most neglected children are in middle and upper class households. While their physical needs are being met, and they may even be showered with a wealth of material things, many of them are emotionally starved (Geneva Gay, 1995).

In the last decade, there has been numerous reports of violent crimes committed by young children who are portraying emotional ineptitude, desperation, and recklessness in their families and communities. There is a vision of hope to address this epidemic of crime by our children by implementing key strategies of enhancing "emotional intelligence" in the school curriculum for early childhood education. Dr. Daniel Goleman, a Harvard psychologist, had completed research indicating that teachers and parents must utilize essential elements of emotional intelligence to help children develop an appropriate balance between intellect and emotional control. Goleman's description of "emotional intelligence is:

"Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness and impulse control, persistence, zeal, self-motivation, empathy, and social deftness" (Goleman, 1995).

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Emotional intelligence is not fixed at birth. Current research including new insights into the brain's architecture of underlying emotions and rationality. Goleman shows how teachers and parents can nurture and strengthen the emotional and intellectual processes in young children. The emotional lessons a child learns actually sculpts the brain's curiosity. This research offers a new vision for educators to prepare pre-service and inservice teachers to best meet the needs of the young children that they are responsible for teaching.

The education system provides an excellent opportunity for adults and children to explore and practice the mutuality and reciprocity of respect and caring necessary to sustain human life in this democratic society. Teachers are capable of having a major impact on creating a more peaceful society if they develop a knowledge base which includes current research on peace education. Teachers must also be taught teaching strategies that utilize caring concepts as an enhancement to the existing academic program. The elementary curriculum must provide opportunities for children to learn caring skills as part of the daily activities, which require weekly practice.

A peace education component in the curriculum should focus on the importance of the consistent creation of an open and supportive classroom climate which encourages children's self-expression, appreciation of others who have worked for social change; and repeated experiences in group processes dealing with social problems solving consensus, decision-making, and centering techniques (Swadener, 1988).

Care is conveyed in many ways. At the institutional level, schools can be organized to provide continuity and support for relationships of caring and trust. At the individual level, parents and teachers show their caring through characteristic forms of attentions, by sharing their own dreams and doubts, by cooperating in children's activities, and by providing carefully for the steady growth of the children in their charge (Robin Burns, 1981).

Peace education at the elementary school level stresses the need to include concepts on interpersonal relations when teaching young children. This can lead children to pro-social behavior and to view themselves as peaceful, positive human beings.

Peace education refers to a non-authoritarian educational process that is compatible with peace and avoids all structural violence, not just education about peace. Peace research and peace education promotes the desired result of developing social literacy skills in students for responsible non-violent participation within a democratic society. Parents and teachers play a critical role in facilitating positive peace actions in the personal, home, and school environments of the student. At the elementary level, cooperative games and group play with an emphasis on sharing also promote this environment (Larsson, 1988).

Some teaching skills are often similar to parenting skills, transmitted from generation to generation through observing, emulating, and remembering an admired parent or teacher. Unfortunately, pre-service teachers in teacher education programs at present can not associate today's discipline problems to those of ten years ago. In that era, the major problems were "playing hookie" for secondary students and verbal and/or fist fights in the elementary schools. Today's discipline problems include shootings, aggravated physical assault (stabbings, etc.) and gang activity. Thus, there is a need to restructure our thinking in terms of ensuring that concepts taught in teacher education programs today match critical issues existing in K-12 schools.

Dr. Brazelton has identifies seven key elements describing children's capacity to learn:

1. Confidence. A sense of control and mastery of one's body, behavior, and world; the children's sense that he is more likely than not to succeed at what he undertakes, and that adults will be helpful.
2. Curiosity. The sense that finding out about things is positive and leads to pleasure.
3. Intentionality. The wish and capacity to have an impact, and to act upon that with persistence. This is related to a sense of competence, of being effective.
4. Self-control. The ability to modulate and control one's own actions in age-appropriate ways; a sense of inner control.
5. Relatedness. The ability to engage with others based on the sense of being understood by and understanding others.
6. Capacity to communicate. The wish and ability to verbally exchange ideas, feelings, and concepts with others. This related to a sense of trust in others and of pleasure in engaging with others, including adults.
7. Cooperativeness. The ability to balance one's own needs with others in group activity (Goleman, 1995)

Thus, the anticipated result of this project is for teachers and parents to unite their efforts and help children to develop to their fullest intellectual and emotional capacities, ensuring that they have an opportunity for success.

Goals of Peace Education

1. Focus national attention on the necessity of implementing peace education in the curriculum for elementary schools and to nourish emotional intelligence in all children.

2. Emphasize caring skills in the appropriate subject areas in the academic programs of American schools.

3. Promote collaboration of school personnel, parents, and community leaders in an effort to prepare children to contribute to a peaceful, caring society.

Objectives of Peace Education:

1. Provide short courses, workshops and seminars for educators, parents, and community leaders addressing major elements of peace education and emotional intelligence.

2. Provide research findings on successful peace education programs that have strengthened the caring skills of students on inner-city schools, as well as schools across this country.

3. Encourage new research studies investigating the impact of a curriculum that empowers children with positive problem-solving skills and a mechanism for accepting and sharing expressions of caring in their interactions in the family, school, and community.

According to Kris Bosworth, caring is an integral part of relationships within human circles of intimate friends and family members as well as in schools, communities, and the rest of the world.

Caring is an umbrellas concept that encompasses and connects a range of discrete subjects, such as empathy, altruism, appropriate social behavior, and efficiency. Consequently, caring has the additional value of being a term of significance for those in social action. Caring necessarily involves mutuality and connection (Chaskin & Rovers, 1995)

The major characteristics of a caring teacher is related to attitude, positive demeanor, and commitment in the following categories:

1. Classroom or teaching practices
2. During and after school help and guidance
3. Personal characteristics

Peace Education Activities:
Teachers:

Sample Peace Education strategies to implement into the existing curriculum that enhance peace and caring skills, and nourish the emotional intelligence of children in grades K-3 include:

1. Develop a personal relationship with students in your class in the following ways:
    a. Have one-to-one informal discussions at least twice weekly
    b. Define human characteristics which reflects caring such as:
        1. greeting people with pleasantries
        2. helping each other in small ways
        3. place a word which is a caring term on the board daily such as; respect, appreciate, and help
    c. Thinking positive and speaking positively about people, places, and events; and avoiding negative comments in the presence of children until all the facts are known.
    d. Treating everyone with the same dignity and respect that you enjoy from others.
2. Develop class rules and consequences, allowing the students to participate in the activity, and share in the final decisions. Examples of rules and consequences:

    Rule 1: Everyone must be recognized by the teacher before speaking to the class.

    Consequence 1:

    First Offense: Student loses one privilege.

    Second Offense: Student loses two privileges.

    When the students participate in the determination of consequences, they will more readily accept them without anger.
3. Allow the students to collaborate, develop, and/or choose a caring class object which will serve as a reminder to focus on caring about other human beings. (May be a puppet or an animal friend).
4. Create a weekly award for the most caring person in the class. Develop criteria upon which the winner will be based. (Ex: Most Helpful, Supportive, Positive Attitude or Demeanor).
5. As a weekly activity, allow each student to identify a caring person from their homes, community, or school and tell why the person was selected.
6. Help children to analyze their feelings of anger, identify the reason(s) for their anger, and have them provide other options to acting on anger feelings.
7. Discuss teasing and ridicule as part of a lesson in Reading, Science, and Social Studies that focus on the hurt and unfairness they produce.

8. Help students analyze the conflict they see on television and at the movies.
9. Have children role play negative interactions that they might see in their lives, homes, or communities. Then, have students process how those interactions may be made more positive and have them role play the same interactions they described earlier, but in a more positive mode.
10. Allow students to identify two conflictual situations from the community or at school and allow them to develop positive solutions to those conflicts.

Parents:

1. Weekly family meetings with no phone interruptions, visitors, or television allowed. Each family member is to identify three positive behavioral traits and three negative behavioral traits of the other members and discuss how that family member feels when those positive and negative traits are displayed on a daily basis.
2. In the presence of your children talk positively about other people, particularly about your child's teacher and school personnel.
3. Develop house/family rules and consequences and allow the whole family to participate in the total process.
4. Allow your children to observe you being kind and caring to others in a genuine manner. Show how you feel rewarded in doing this for others.
5. Share with your children stories about caring people and the benefit of caring about oneself, their school, the community, and society.
6. Develop family teachings to address conflict and resolve problems. Some examples include:
    a. Confronting someone with the facts about the situation to clarify a misunderstanding. Also, let your children see you reach out to someone you may have hurt unintentionally.
    b. Giving an apology to someone, saying "I'm sorry for my behavior. It was based on wrong information, or I acted impulsively". Children will learn that it is OK to admit that they are sometimes in error.
    c. Allow children to investigate situations they are angry about. Please answer their questions honestly and thoroughly. Allow the children to freely express their feelings of disappointments or sadness.
7. Have one meal together daily or at least weekly and encourage everyone to participate in informal positive family conversation.
8. Never go to bed at night without hugging each child and telling them that you love them no matter what happened during the day. Parents sometimes resent their child's behavior but they always love the child. Always start a new day with a clean slate; nothing left over from yesterday.
9. Always find something to praise your child for daily, if it is only for his/her smile.
10. Never discipline children verbally or physically when you are angry.

Principals:

1. Greet as many students and teachers pleasantly with a smile each day as you can.
2. Develop a school creed which includes statements of caring, peace, and self-pride, which is recited daily and placed on display where students may read it as often as possible.
3. Invite parents, community leaders, and faculty to read to the students daily. Have one hour or one-half hour book reviews monthly, addressing peace and caring issues. This can occur during lunchtime if the grades are divided into two groups, with one group meeting on the first Tuesday of the month and the other group meeting on the third Tuesday of the month.

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